

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ADP-00 DODE-00 NSC-10 NSCE-00 CIAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7555

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUWAIT 3182

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS KU

SUBJECT: VISIT OF DR. PETER TANOUS

REF: (A) STATE 169434 (B) STATE 172527

1. TANOUS VISTIED KUWAIT BETWEEN AUGUST 26 AND 30. HE CALLED ON AMBASSADOR AND EMBOFFS DAY AFTER ARRIVING HERE AND AGAIN SHORTLY PRIOR TO DEPARTING FOR BEIRUT WHERE HE WAS TO SEE PRESIDENT FRANJIEH. WHILE HERE HE MET WITH AMIR, CP/PM, MINDEF SHAIKH SAAD, AMBASSADOR SALEM AND OTHER TOP GOK OFFICIALS WHO, ACCORDING TANOUS, EXPRESSED INTEREST IN PURCHASING US MILITARY EQUIPMENT BUT WHO REFLECTED CONCERN OVER POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS ARISING OUT OF US POLICY TO MID EAST.

2. TANOUS TOLD US HE URGED GOK TO GIVE HIGH PRIORITY TO TRAINING. IN REPLY TO QUERY FROM MINDEF RE STAFF COLLEGE-LEVEL TRAINING, TANOUS ADVISED HIM TO SEND GOK OFFICERS FIRST TO MORE SPECIALIZED MILITARY SCHOOLS SUCH AS INFANTRY SCHOOL. POSSIBLE, THEREFORE, GOK WILL COME FORWARD SOON WITH REQUESTS FOR ADDITIONAL TRAINING FOR ARMY OFFICERS.

3. AMBASSADOR ASKED TANOUS ABOUT HIS VIEW OF HIS STATUS/RELATIONSHIP WITH SHAIKH SALEM AND WITH MINISTRY OF DEFENSE, POINTING OUT LINE BETWEEN ANY ADVISORY ROLE HE TOOK ON AND THAT OF A US MILITARY SUPPORT GROUP IN KUWAIT SHOULD BE
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CAREFULLY DRAWN. ASKING THAT INFO BE KEPT IN STRICTEST

CONFIDENCE TANOUS SAID HE HAS BEEN ASKED BY SHAIKH SALEM TO ACT AS DE FACTO KUWAIT MILITARY AFFAIRS LIAISON REPRESENTATIVE IN WASHINGTON BECAUSE OF ABSENCE QUALIFIES KUWAITI STAFF. HE MADE DISTINCTION BETWEEN HIS AGREEING TO TAKE ON SUCH DUTIES AND BEING A FULL-FLEDGED MILITARY ADVISOR. HE NOTED, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT HE WOULD NOT BE ABLE SPEND MUCH TIME IN KUWAIT AND THIS EFFECTIVELY PRECLUDED HIS ACTING AS MILITARY ADVISOR TO MINDEF. HE ALSO NOTED THAT IF HE AGREES TO SHAIKH SALEM'S REQUEST, AND APPARENTLY HE INTENDS TO DO SO, IT WILL REQUIRE THAT HE DIVEST HIMSELF OF CERTAIN PRIVATE BUSINESS INTERESTS WHICH HAS NOT YET BEEN DONE.

4. COMMENT: TANOUS APPEARS TO HAVE POSITION OF TRUST WITH SENIOR LEVELS GOK AND IT LIKELY HE WILL PLAY ROLE FOR GOK AND AMBASSADOR SALEM IN WASHINGTON ON MILITARY MATTERS VIS-A-VIS US. EXACT NATURE HIS DUTIES NOT YET ESTABLISHED, HOWEVER. AS OF NOW HIS ROLE AND RELATIONSHIP WITH GOK VERY INFORMAL AND HE REMAINS PRIVATE US BUSINESSMAN WITH DIRECT STAKE IN OUTCOME CERTAIN PURCHASES BY GOK OF US EQUIPMENT. I BELIEVE THEREFORE IT PREMATURE PROVIDE DETAILED BRIEFING AS SUGGESTED PARA 1 REF B. AT SAME TIME BELIEVE TANOUS CAN BE VERY HELPFUL TO BOTH SIDES. ASSUMING HIS POSITION WITH GOK IS FORMALIZED AND HIS PRIVATE INTERESTS NO LONGER ARE A FACTOR, MAY BE USEFUL PROVIDE MORE DETAILED INFO RE OUR PROGRAMS AND OBJECTIVES AT LATER DATE. FOR TIME BEING PREFER TO MAINTAIN DIRECT EMBASSY-GOK CHANNELS HERE FOR THESE PURPOSES.

5. WISH STRESS NEED TO KEEP INFO PARA 3 STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.
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